

Earthquake Report - JAIF

We have been reporting a status of Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power station by summarizing news aired by NHK, which is Japanese national broadcasting company. We regard it as most credible news among many news sources and we are happy to say that NHK's English website has gotten enriched and now you can see movies and English scripts at <http://www3.nhk.or.jp/daily/english/society.html>. Given this situation, we decide to simply place these scripts as it is for the record in case that it will be deleted from the website later, rather than summarizing news as we did.

No. 54: 18:00, April 16

NHK news regarding status of Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power station yesterday and today.

●Wastewater level at No.2 reactor tunnel rising

The operator of the troubled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant says the level of highly radioactive water in a tunnel of the No. 2 reactor has been rising.

Contaminated water in the plant's facilities is hampering efforts to restore reactor cooling systems. Leakages of such water into the ocean and the ground are also raising concern.

Tokyo Electric Power Company, or TEPCO, finished transferring part of the wastewater -- about 660 tons -- from the tunnel to a condenser in a turbine building on Wednesday.

The transfer lowered the water level in the tunnel by 8 centimeters, but it began rising again, exceeding the previous level by 2.5 centimeters as of Saturday morning.

TEPCO says work to fix the leakage of highly radioactive water into the ocean earlier this month may have caused water from the reactor to accumulate in the tunnel.

The company hopes to begin transferring contaminated water to a waste-processing facility by the end of next week. It is now accelerating work to monitor and fix water leaks in the facility.

Highly radioactive water may also be leaking underground.

On Thursday, TEPCO detected higher radiation levels in underground water. The observed level was up to 38 times that of one week ago.

TEPCO began taking radiation readings 3 times per week on Saturday, instead of just once per week.

Saturday, April 16, 2011 12:13 +0900 (JST)

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●Mineral used to absorb radioactive materials

The operator of the troubled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant has begun placing a mineral in the sea to absorb radioactive materials contaminating the seawater around the plant.

Tokyo Electric Power Company, or TEPCO, on Friday dropped sandbags containing the mineral zeolite into the sea near the plant's water intakes. Zeolite is widely used to absorb contaminating materials.

TEPCO hopes the zeolite will absorb radioactive materials, including cesium-137, which has a half-life of 30 years.

The utility company plans to drop in 10 sandbags each containing 100 kilograms of zeolite. It will raise the bags at regular intervals to check the radiation levels on their surfaces.

Earlier this month, highly radioactive water was found leaking into the sea from a facility at the No.2 reactor. The health ministry later detected radioactivity above the legal limit in fish caught off the plant.

TEPCO has carried out construction work to stop the leak and is checking for others.

In other efforts to prevent the spread of radioactive substances in the sea, the company has already installed metal boards and underwater barriers near the plant.

Friday, April 15, 2011 22:20 +0900 (JST)

●No radiation change observed after water release

Japan's nuclear safety agency says no major changes have been observed in the concentration of radioactive substances in the sea around the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant after the release of low-level contaminated water.

Tokyo Electric Power Company, or TEPCO, discharged a total of 10,393 tons of low-level radioactive wastewater from its damaged Fukushima plant between April 4th and 10th.

The government's Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency says the amount of wastewater disposed of was 1,100 tons less than originally planned, resulting in the reduced release of radioactive substances.

To assess the effect of the contaminated water, the power company collected sea water samples from around the plant as well as from 15 kilometers offshore.

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The nuclear safety agency says it has concluded that the data shows no major change in the concentration of radioactive substances.

But the agency also directed TEPCO to carry out long-term monitoring over a wider area and to assess the impact of the discharge by measuring radiation levels in fish and shellfish caught in nearby waters.

When releasing the wastewater, TEPCO had said that even if a person were to eat seafood from nearby waters every day for one year, the radiation exposure would total 0.6 millisieverts, which is below the annual permissible level of one millisievert.

Friday, April 15, 2011 22:20 +0900 (JST)

●Fish caught off Ibaraki trade at normal prices

The first catches of fish in nearly 2 weeks off Ibaraki Prefecture have been shipped to Tokyo's Tsukiji market. Fishing in the area had been suspended due to the detection of a radioactive substance exceeding the legal limit.

Four kinds of fish were shipped to the market on Saturday morning in 40 boxes that had a note attached attesting that they do not contain radioactive substances exceeding the limit.

The Tokyo metropolitan government says all the shipped fish from Ibaraki Prefecture traded at almost normal prices.

Fishing cooperatives in Ibaraki Prefecture had suspended their activities as brokers and retailers refused to buy fish from the area.

Above-legal-limit levels of a radioactive substance were found in small fish called sand lances caught off the prefecture on April 4th.

On Friday, fishermen resumed catching other varieties of fish that do not contain radioactive substances above the legal limit.

A wholesaler says he was waiting for fish caught off Ibaraki Prefecture. He says he will sell them and wants consumers to buy them because they are proven to be safe.

Saturday, April 16, 2011 10:46 +0900 (JST)

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●Noda: Japan must send disaster information quickly

Finance Minister Yoshihiko Noda has said Japan must offer quick and accurate information on problems stemming from the March 11th disaster to gain international support for its rebuilding efforts.

Noda was speaking to reporters in Washington on Friday after a 2-day meeting of finance ministers and central bank governors of the Group of 20 nations.

They ended the meeting by issuing a joint statement expressing solidarity with the Japanese people over the March 11th earthquake and confidence in the resilience of the Japanese economy and financial sector.

The Japanese minister said other countries had promised to provide any needed cooperation.

Noda said he had candidly explained the ongoing problems at Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, circulation of harmful gossip, and electricity shortages.

Saturday, April 16, 2011 12:42 +0900 (JST)

●EU sets radiation threshold for ships from Japan

The European Commission has advised European ports to check radiation levels on ships and cargoes arriving from Japan to see whether they exceed a new limit.

In an announcement on Friday, it suggested a new limit of 0.2 microsieverts per hour above the normal level, which is 0.1 microsievert per hour.

The announcement says if port authorities detect radiation levels above the limit, the relevant government should inform the Commission and the ship in question should be thoroughly washed.

The announcement came a day after the first ship to leave Japan since the start of the nuclear crisis docked in the Dutch port of Rotterdam.

An EU spokesperson says no abnormal levels of radiation have been detected in the ship.

EU member nations including Germany and Spain had already set their own radiation limits for ships and cargoes arriving from Japan.

Saturday, April 16, 2011 09:04 +0900 (JST)

End